

The Ballerina

Tiny fingers tipped with shell pink nails wave above her in the cot
Exploring their small world and reaching for the twirling mobile that
hangs there

Enchanted by the colours and the movement, she wants so much to
touch

Ten small toes that flex and wriggle as they are lowered to the floor
With a sway and a wobble, first steps are taken

One, two and three and then the softness of the sofa beckons
A round of family applause confirms the triumph

Two or three years pass and at nursery the same small hands plunge
into a ball of wet clay

What joy to squeeze that sticky mess!

All that pulling and stretching and rolling is such fun

The child unknowing, is helping the muscles that will allow her to use
her hands in so many ways

In the playground those feet are now running and jumping, secure in
their strength and speed

Who knows where they will take her ?

At Ballet School she learns to draw the shapes in the music with her
hands

Her slender arms and long fingers learn how to express love, longing
and loss

While her strong young toes bear her weight on point

As she spins and leaps across the studio floor

Many years pass and then her dancing days are over
So, she turns to the next generation
She passes her skills to them with warm smiles and encouragement
Tempered with high expectations
Her arms and hands still have the elegance and grace of her youth
But her feet have become a little slower
She looks back and remembers her early school days, especially the
joy of movement as she ran and jumped in the playground

But her favourite memory is stepping into the spotlight
As the sweet silver sound of the celeste took her across the stage
And Tschaikovsky's glorious music filled the theatre
For in those moments, she **was** the Sugar Plum Fairy
In her favourite costume – a feather light tutu of rose pink silk,
embroidered with crystals and sequins
At the end of the performance, as applause rang out, flowers were
thrown onto the stage and large bouquets filled her arms
The memory is caught and held forever in a framed photograph

It is her most treasured possession.